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Inland Transport Committee

Working Party on Inland Water Transport

Working Party on the Standardization of Technical and Safety Requirements in Inland Navigation

Fifty-third session
Geneva, 27-29 June 2018
Item 2 of the provisional agenda
Outcome of the International Ministerial Conference "Connecting by Inland Navigation" (Wroclaw, Poland, 18-19 April 2018)

Revised draft of the ministerial declaration of the International Conference on Inland Waterway Transport

Note by the secretariat

Mandate

1. This document is submitted in line with cluster 5: Inland Waterway Transport, paragraph 5.1 of the programme of work 2018-2019 (ECE/TRANS/SC.3/2017/24) adopted by the Inland Transport Committee at its eightieth session (20-23 February 2018).

2. At its sixty-first session, the Working Party on Inland Water Transport (SC.3) took note of the "zero" draft ministerial declaration of the International Waterway Transport (Wroclaw (Poland), 18-19 April 2018) (Informal document SC.3 No. 5 (2017)). SC.3 asked member States and other stakeholders to send written proposals and amendments to the secretariat. The secretariat was asked to prepare the first draft and to circulate it to member States (ECE/TRANS/SC.3/205, paras. 60-70).

3. The final draft of the Ministerial Declaration, finalized at the fifty-second session of the Working Party on the Standardization of Technical and Safety Requirements in Inland Navigation (SC.3/WP.3), is represented in the annex.

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Annex

Ministerial declaration of the International Ministerial Conference on Inland Water Transport

Wroclaw, Poland, 18 April 2018

INLAND NAVIGATION IN A GLOBAL SETTING

We, the Ministers of all countries having a vested interest in inland water transport and representatives of international organizations and observers, meeting at the International Conference on Inland Water Transport in Wroclaw, Poland, on 18 April 2018,

Preamble

Reaffirming the commitment to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals as defined in the new 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development adopted at the United Nations Sustainable Development Summit on 25 September 2015, which are relevant to inland water transport to ensure its safety, accessibility, affordability and links with energy and the environment,

Recognizing the importance of international high-level events for the promotion of inland water transport at the international level, such as: the Pan-European Ministerial Conference held on 11 September 1991 in Budapest, the Pan-European Conference on inland water transport held on 5 and 6 September 2001 in Rotterdam (Netherlands), the pan-European Conference on inland water transport "Inland navigation: A key element of the future pan-European transport system" held on 13 and 14 September 2006 in Bucharest and the International High-Level Conference on inland water transport held on 22 February 2017 in Geneva,

Recognizing the advantages of inland water transport as a significant part of a balanced transport system, especially its safety level, efficiency in terms of energy and costs, low emissions and lack of congestion, contribution to reducing transport and logistics costs,

Emphasizing the role of inland water transport for the sustainable functioning of national transport and cross border systems and its contribution to social and economic development, including landlocked developing countries and regions with inadequate or missing road and rail network,

Appreciating the ongoing work on the establishment of a sustainable transport system in the pan-European region by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe and its member States, including international projects on eliminating administrative barriers, the rehabilitation of the fairway of international rivers, removing bottlenecks on waterways, national transport strategies and projects aimed at the development of inland water transport infrastructure,

Conscious that the aforementioned challenges in the sector should also be addressed at the international level,

Emphasizing the importance of the human factor for the sector, which calls for adequate professional competencies and skills and the need to make the sector more attractive,

Keeping in mind the links between inland water transport and multimodal terminals, deep-sea shipping and other modes of transport,

Acknowledging the role of modern technologies, innovations and digitalization in ensuring navigation safety and better logistics integration,

Recognizing the need for joining forces to extract the significant, still untapped, potential of the sector and, therefore, gaining significant political support at the highest level,

Convinced that the outcome of this Conference should bring practical value in terms of safety, environmental aspects, logistics, attractiveness and benefits for the economy,

Hereby *endorse* the following objectives and actions and invite countries and all parties concerned to develop action plans for their implementation:

(a) To foster the role of inland water transport as safe, environmentally sound and economically efficient by promoting an appropriate balance among all transport modes and thus using it as a significant contributor to national, regional and international development;

(b) To address the challenges of sustainable development of mobility, also through inland water transport, by supporting intergovernmental multi-disciplinary cooperation in the field of transport and transport-related issues and by placing due emphasis on the importance of mobilizing resources and aligning financing flows with sustainable development objectives;

(c) To encourage investment in the sector aimed at building and modernizing the inland waterway infrastructure, the fleet and ports as well as fostering innovation and using alternative fuels, to increase the market share of inland water transport and ensuring that it is resilient to climate change;

(d) To take the necessary steps to promote the attractiveness of the sector to the market and transport workers and increasing its competitiveness and to include these issues in national transport strategies and monitor the progress thereof.

Strategic actions to pursue based on these objectives

Building up a solid regulatory framework aimed at increasing the efficiency of inland water transport

1. Ministers suggest to countries lacking a sufficient regulatory framework for inland water transport to use and consider acceding to the United Nations international conventions relevant to inland water transport.

2. Ministers point out the importance of bilateral and multilateral treaties and agreements for the development of international transport and cross-border systems.

3. Ministers welcome the exchange of good practices and maintaining a policy dialogue aimed at increasing the efficiency of inland water transport.

Ensuring the appropriate balance among all transport modes, streamlining cargo flows and promoting the multimodality

4. Ministers indicate that inland water transport due to its advantages in transporting large quantities over longer distances, safety, efficiency in terms of energy and costs, low emissions and lack of congestion, is competitive with other inland transport modes.

5. Ministers recognize a strong need for ensuring the appropriate balance among all transport modes and will undertake measures to achieve this.

6. Ministers agree to set out national development plans aimed at ensuring that the full capacity of the inland waterway system is used.

7. Ministers invite countries and international organizations to facilitate free movement of cargo and passengers on inland waterways.

8. Ministers welcome efforts aiming to ensure that the main inland waterways of international importance are fully integrated into international transport networks in order to facilitate access to financial resources of international financial institutions for their development.

9. Ministers emphasize the role of international agreements and legislation in the field of infrastructure for the coordinated development of all transport modes.

10. Ministers agree to undertake and coordinate measures to facilitate integration of inland water transport in multimodal transport and logistics chains.

11. Ministers promote the role of water transport using alternative fuels or electromotion in an urban environment.

Encouraging the realization of a modern fleet and fostering innovations

12. Ministers acknowledge that a modern inland water fleet is of major importance for the navigation safety, efficiency and environmental **protection**. Ministers call upon the sector to create, where necessary, new types of vessels and the introduction of innovations and modern technologies to ensure safety, reducing the risk of accidents minimizing environmental impact and combatting climate change.

13. Ministers encourage efforts aimed at creating favourable financial and economic regimes to encourage the realization of a modern inland water fleet and support the exchange of good practices on this issue.

14. Ministers recognize that the development of digital technologies and data exchange, River Information Services, Vessel Traffic Services and the traffic management on inland waterways, the digitalization and other opportunities given by new technologies is a significant step forward to a sustainable and efficient transport mode and invite countries and international organizations to promote its cross-border harmonized development.

Building the inland waterway infrastructure resilient to climate changes

15. Ministers agree that actions should be undertaken to ensure the resilience of the sector to climate changes. To this end, Ministers support the work on determining the climate trends affecting navigation to allow the planning of business activities for longer periods.

16. Ministers welcome the initiatives by countries on the waterway building, maintenance and rehabilitation plans of international rivers and invite other countries to consider these initiatives when maintaining their waterways.

Promoting the attractiveness of the sector to the market and increasing its competitiveness

17. Ministers call upon the sector to improve the quality of transport services in terms of availability, safety, reliability and other needs of transport users.

18. Ministers recognize the need for a level playing field across the transport modalities. Ministers call upon countries to join efforts to achieve this.

19. Ministers welcome efforts to more actively engage the private sector in projects aimed at the development of inland waterways, where it is feasible.

20. Ministers will improve the quality of education and training and call upon the sector to make the profession more attractive through better working and social conditions.

21. Ministers will undertake reasonable measures to ensure that crew certificates and vessel documents are recognized, with the aim of improving mobility of vessels and crews.

22. Ministers encourage measures aimed at promoting modern technologies, automation and innovations in the sector.

23. Ministers ask to increase the role of freight and passenger transport as well as recreational navigation on inland waterways for social and economic development, enhancing the international cooperation.

Implementation

24. Ministers encourage countries, including governmental executive bodies, the private sector, associations and academia, to maintain policy dialogue on good practices and measures relevant to the implementation of the objectives under the patronage of the Inland Transport Committee of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe with the aim of ensuring that the development of Inland Water Transport is pursued in an internationally harmonized manner. Ministers invite regional integration organizations, United Nations Regional Commissions, River Commissions, international and public organizations, international financial institutions, and academia to contribute to the dialogue.

25. Ministers invite countries and international organizations to develop action plans and allocate funding for the implementation of these objectives and strategic actions.

26. Ministers invite countries to support the development of harmonized statistics on inland water transport relevant to qualitative and quantitative indicators of the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals in order to support effective decision making at national and international level in the sector.

27. Ministers invite the secretariat of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe to prepare a report on progress achieved in relation to these objectives to be presented at a subsequent international conference on Inland Water Transport to be held in 2023.